

**Finance & Personnel Committee  
of the City of Onalaska**

Wednesday, January 8, 2020

1

1 The Meeting of the Finance & Personnel Committee of the City of Onalaska was called to order  
2 on Wednesday, January 8, 2020. It was noted that the meeting had been announced and a notice  
3 posted at City Hall.  
4

5 Roll call was taken, with the following members present: Ald. Diane Wulf, Ald. Jim Olson, Ald.  
6 Dan Stevens  
7

8 Also Present: City Administrator Eric Rindfleisch, Mayor Kim Smith, City Clerk Cari  
9 Burmaster, Financial Services Director/Treasurer Fred Buehler, Human Resource Director Hope  
10 Burchell, Parks and Recreation Director Dan Wick, Police Chief Charles Ashbeck, Fire Chief  
11 Billy Hayes, Ald. Tom Smith  
12

13 **Item 2 – Approval of minutes from the previous meeting**  
14

15 Motion by Ald. Olson, second by Ald. Wulf, to approve the minutes from the previous meeting  
16 as printed and on file in the City Clerk’s Office.  
17

18 On voice vote, motion carried.  
19

20 **Item 3 – Public Input (limited to 3 minutes/individual)**  
21

22 Ald. Stevens called three times for anyone wishing to provide public input and closed that  
23 portion of the meeting.  
24

25 **Consideration and possible action on the following items:**  
26

27 **FINANCE**  
28

29 **Item 4 – 2019 Omni Center Financials**  
30

31 Fred reported that revenues totaled \$555,894.66, and expenditures totaled \$569,012.70 for a  
32 deficit of \$13,118.04. Fred also reported the financials represent November’s cash receipts, and  
33 the expenditures represent November’s invoices.  
34

35 Dan noted the report had been printed December 14 and told committee members there is  
36 approximately \$14,000 of labor in the expense account. Dan also told committee members it  
37 represents December business, and that approximately \$10,000 needs to be transferred from the  
38 liquor account to the revenue account. Dan said, “I think we’re in very good position at the  
39 Omni Center. We had a very good December, and I think as the numbers come in we’re going to  
40 see a positive out of the Omni Center financials for 2019.”  
41

42 Motion by Ald. Olson, second by Ald. Wulf, to accept the 2019 Omni Center Financials.  
43

44 On voice vote, motion carried.

Reviewed 1/10/20 by Hope Burchell & Fred Buehler

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2

45

46 **Item 5 – 2019 General Fund Financials**

47

48 Fred referred to General Fund Revenue Account No. 100-00000-45110 (“Court Penalties”) and  
49 noted the city had collected \$95,882.81 through November (\$95,000 had been anticipated). Fred  
50 said most of the revenues city departments had anticipated either will be met or exceeded. Fred  
51 told committee members the expected costs for snow and ice removal (overtime, salt and sand)  
52 would not be as much as City Engineer Jarrod Holter had anticipated due to mild weather so far  
53 this winter.

54

55 Motion by Ald. Wulf, second by Ald. Olson, to approve the 2019 General Fund Financials.

56

57 On voice vote, motion carried.

58

59 **Item 6 – Update regarding a county notification system called RAVE/Smart911 and the**  
60 **discontinuance of Code Red**

61

62 Fire Chief Hayes told committee members he has been working with La Crosse County on  
63 RAVE/Smart911 for the last six months. Fire Chief Hayes said the City of Onalaska had utilized  
64 Code Red as an emergency notification system for situations such as alerts and road closures.  
65 Citizens could subscribe to Code Red via cityofonalaska.com. Fire Chief Hayes told committee  
66 members the cost of Code Red (Approximately \$10,000, plus \$3,000 for weather alerts) had not  
67 decreased over the last decade. The city was budgeting approximately \$13,000 a year for the  
68 Code Red service. Fire Chief Hayes noted no alerts had gone out in 2019; however, he also  
69 noted the city had a limited number of minutes and no one wanted to send out messages so that  
70 that the city did not utilize its minutes in case those minutes truly were needed. Also, there was  
71 an additional cost to the city if it exceeded its minutes.

72

73 Fire Chief Hayes said, “It really was not an effective notification system. The customer service  
74 support was not where it used to be. The training was not where it used to be. The user-  
75 friendliness on our end to send the messages out was very challenging. [Assistant Police] Chief  
76 [Troy] Miller, when he was the Police Chief at that time, he and I set up numerous training  
77 sessions, and it just did not go anywhere.”

78

79 Fire Chief Hayes said La Crosse County also was utilizing Code Red and wished to convert to  
80 RAVE (the platform) and Smart911 (sign-up notification system). La Crosse County had  
81 attempted to install RAVE/Smart911 for at least two years; however, the county was having  
82 difficulties getting the system approved via the county budgeting process. Fire Chief Hayes said  
83 La Crosse County wanted to utilize RAVE/Smart911 throughout the entire county; however, the  
84 county had met resistance. Fire Chief Hayes said that while he had expressed his desire to begin  
85 utilizing RAVE/Smart911, concerns were raised regarding who would pay up front for the  
86 service. Fire Chief Hayes said he was told by EDC toward the end of 2019 it believed

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3

87 RAVE/Smart911 could get passed in La Crosse County's budget if the City of Onalaska were to  
88 utilize the service. Fire Chief Hayes told committee members he still needed to budget \$13,000  
89 for Code Red in 2020. La Crosse County passed RAVE/Smart911 in its budget via shared  
90 services and shared cost, and the City of Onalaska's share to utilize RAVE/Smart911 was  
91 \$1,500. Fire Chief Hayes noted this is a savings of \$11,500 for the city and said, "Knowing how  
92 budgets go and how we look and cut and scramble to get our budgets in every year, \$11,500 is a  
93 big deal.

94  
95 Also, the usage for us as users to send this out is much easier. It's a three-step process. Chief  
96 Ashbeck has gone through some of the training with myself. He can attest it's much easier once  
97 you learn it, obviously, but there's also the continuity. As you know, the Council approved the  
98 City Administrator and myself to participate with the La Crosse Area Planning Committee on a  
99 shared-service study for fire and EMS in 2020. This is something that is a direct reflection of  
100 what you can do. [There are] shared costs, but [you] also have continuity of services and  
101 programs throughout the county, which makes much more sense. That means other jurisdictions  
102 will be using RAVE. If somebody lived in Onalaska and wanted to move to Holmen or some  
103 other area, at least the program would be the same and they would understand the program  
104 versus having to go to three or four different programs based on the jurisdiction of what they use.  
105 It just made much more sense."

106  
107 Fire Chief Hayes said he and Hope spent the morning of December 31 attempting to update the  
108 notification system and place it on cityofonalaska.com so that citizens could register. Fire Chief  
109 Hayes said that while concerns initially were raised when the city informed citizens December  
110 31 was the last day Code Red would be utilized, residents began registering for  
111 RAVE/Smart911. Fire Chief Hayes told committee members training will be available for the  
112 individuals who will responsible for sending out messages. The city has unlimited minutes  
113 available for RAVE/Smart911. Fire Chief Hayes said, "I know [the switch from Code Red to  
114 RAVE/Smart911] seemed very quick, but there was a reason for that. We didn't know we were  
115 going to be able to do that, and I had to make a decision within the last week or so, otherwise I  
116 would've been locked into another one-year contract with Code Red."

117  
118 Ald. Olson thanked Fire Chief Hayes for his work on switching the city's notification system  
119 from Code Red to RAVE/Smart911.

120  
121 Ald. Wulf noted she had signed up for RAVE/Smart911 and said it had been easy to establish the  
122 account. Ald. Wulf asked if the city had terminated its contract with Code Red without being  
123 penalized.

124  
125 Fire Chief Hayes said the city's relationship with Code Red is finished and that there were no  
126 penalties for terminating that relationship. Fire Chief Hayes also asked the alderpersons who  
127 sent out newsletters to their constituents to include information regarding the city now utilizing  
128 RAVE/Smart911. Fire Chief Hayes noted WKBT-Ch. 8 had picked up the Fire Department's

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4

129 Facebook post regarding RAVE/Smart911 and said the station had done a story about it. Fire  
130 Chief Hayes said, “We continually need to push the message out just for public awareness, and  
131 to make sure everybody gets signed up and transitioned over.” Fire Chief Hayes also noted he  
132 has assisted citizens in establishing RAVE/Smart911 accounts when they have come to his  
133 office.

134  
135 Ald. Stevens asked what the city will be calling the service.  
136

137 Fire Chief Hayes told Ald. Stevens that RAVE is the platform and noted different notification  
138 systems may be found on RAVE’s website. Smart911 is the application utilized to sign up for  
139 notifications.

140  
141 Ald. Stevens asked if the alderpersons should call the system Smart911 when presenting it to the  
142 public.

143  
144 Fire Chief Hayes said that would be all right to do.  
145

146 Ald. Stevens inquired about the financial savings for the city.  
147

148 Fire Chief Hayes said the financial savings due to switching from Code Red to RAVE/Smart911  
149 is \$11,500.  
150

151 Fred told Ald. Stevens this item will appear on the Non-Consent Agenda at the January 14  
152 Common Council meeting so that the Council may share information regarding RAVE/Smart911  
153 with the general public.  
154

155 Ald. Stevens asked Fire Chief Hayes if he would be willing to share information regarding  
156 RAVE/Smart911 at the Council meeting.  
157

158 Fire Chief Hayes said yes and told Ald. Stevens he is willing to create a PowerPoint presentation  
159 about RAVE/Smart911.  
160

161 Ald. Stevens inquired about the data citizens share when they register for RAVE/Smart911,  
162 asking if there is a way the data remains current if citizens move. Ald. Stevens also inquired  
163 about security regarding the site.  
164

165 Fire Chief Hayes told Ald. Stevens individuals who move to a jurisdiction that does not utilize  
166 RAVE/Smart911 are not able to transfer any data. Fire Chief Hayes said the data remains until  
167 individuals either discontinue or deactivate their account. Fire Chief Hayes said the information  
168 citizens shared with Code Red remains on the server should the city decide to once again utilize  
169 its services. Fire Chief Hayes said, “Let’s say [RAVE/Smart911] doesn’t work or the county  
170 wants to make a modification. I know the cost, even if we’re not on the shared cost with the

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5

171 county, it still would be a substantial savings of what we're paying now with Code Red. If we  
172 decided to go back to Code Red, that information is there. Or if somebody is within the RAVE  
173 program and they move to a jurisdiction that has it, all they have to do is update their address and  
174 that will relocate them and pin them on the map.”

175

176 **Item 7 – Authorization to proceed with an application for a State Trust Fund Loan (STFL)**  
177 **on the 2020 Capital Projects that are not eligible for General Obligation Bonds in the**  
178 **amount of \$542,000**

179

180 Fred told committee members this is the application itself and said he is seeking approval both  
181 from the Finance and Personnel Committee and the Common Council to authorize the  
182 application so that the city may move forward with this process.

183

184 Motion by Ald. Wulf, second by Ald. Olson, to approve authorization to proceed with an  
185 application for a State Trust Fund Loan (STFL) on the 2020 Capital Projects that are not eligible  
186 for General Obligation Bonds in the amount of \$542,000.

187

188 Ald. Wulf noted the Wage Study is listed at \$35,000 and pointed out it is listed at \$25,000 on an  
189 upcoming agenda item.

190

191 Fred noted the Board of Public Works had authorized \$25,000 via the public hearing held in  
192 December 2019.

193

194 City Administrator Rindfleisch referred to a copy of a document from Baker Tilly included in  
195 committee members' packets and noted it is an estimate for the cost of services Baker Tilly  
196 would charge to conduct the study (\$24,375). City Administrator Rindfleisch told committee  
197 members, “Keep in mind that that had not gone to what we're discussing today as to the  
198 expectations, so we funded an amount above that to potentially cover any additional work that  
199 you would like to accomplish.”

200

201 On voice vote, motion carried.

202

203 **PERSONNEL**

204

205 **Item 8 – Review and consideration of expectations of the Compensation Study for 2020**

206

207 City Administrator Rindfleisch referred to the documents that were both emailed to the  
208 alderpersons and placed in their mailboxes earlier Wednesday and apologized for not submitting  
209 this information to Deputy City Clerk JoAnn Marcon in time to include it in their packets. City  
210 Administrator Rindfleisch referred to a document from Baker Tilly and noted it is the document  
211 he had utilized and previously described regarding the type of service Baker Tilly Springsted  
212 could perform for the city. City Administrator Rindfleisch said, “What drove the estimate we  
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Wednesday, January 8, 2020

6

213 put into the Capital Improvements [Budget], which was substantially less than what I anticipated,  
214 is why we did, just in case, ask for a bit more money, making sure it was a comprehensive plan  
215 that covered all the needs the Council had for the Compensation and Classification Study.”

216  
217 City Administrator Rindfleisch referred to the documents the alderpersons had received earlier  
218 Wednesday and said he believes they will find them to be very comprehensive. City  
219 Administrator Rindfleisch said, “When I reviewed this since the Capital [Improvements] Budget  
220 approval, most of the questions I understand the Council to have are included in this document  
221 here. If discussed, if this is the direction that you would like to go, we would be able to, if  
222 necessary, find some comparable studies at a comparable rate. But I will reiterate I think it’s  
223 going to be very difficult to do so. You probably could find some less that would just take  
224 already-documented ratings or do the call-around that identifies, how much are you paying a  
225 police officer or a public worker without really diving into, do the tasks those titles do the same  
226 across the board, which this study would do. It’s hands-on, and it’s very much controlled by  
227 your project administrator, with consultation with [Human Resources] and the Council as to what  
228 your needs are, and with the intense participation of the employees themselves who are currently  
229 working and would be impacted by the study.

230  
231 They could be ready within three weeks to begin the process, and they anticipate a six-month  
232 process before the final report would come back. ... It does take that long because of the research  
233 that they do that is customized to our own needs. They’re not relying on just previously  
234 published research to come back to us. There are multiple steps there, and the input that is  
235 required for them. [One type of] particular input is, what kind of markets would you like to  
236 compare to – not just in general for the whole organization, but on a position basis. For example,  
237 some positions you may recruit nationally or regionally, and some positions you may only want  
238 to recruit people who live locally. That may dictate the marketplace you’re in competition with  
239 for those positions. You also have to decide the philosophy behind your pay plan, which they’ll  
240 customize again to. We have a general philosophy in place, which is, only based on performance  
241 does one get an increase in wages? ... The plan would be developed for those needs we have.”

242  
243 Ald. Stevens said that while he understands items sometimes are inadvertently overlooked, the  
244 study is a comprehensive one and is being presented to the committee “at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour.” Ald.  
245 Stevens said he has not had sufficient time to examine the material he has received and stated he  
246 is glad there is a six-month window. Ald. Stevens said he would feel better if the committee  
247 would instead discuss this item in February.

248  
249 Ald. Wulf stated she agrees with Ald. Stevens, noting the email she had received was timed 4:18  
250 p.m. and she had picked it up at approximately 4:30 p.m. Ald. Wulf noted the document is seven  
251 pages and said she also has not had sufficient time to examine it. Ald. Wulf said she believes the  
252 committee either should refer this item to the February 5 Finance and Personnel Committee  
253 meeting, or refer it to the January 14 Common Council meeting. Ald. Wulf said, “Something  
254 this serious and something that staff has been waiting for, we need to treat this very seriously. ...

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7

255 Just to pass something without having time to read this, I don't feel I'm doing my job. I would  
256 certainly consider the possibility of approving this at Council next week because of the timeline.  
257 When I look at the six months, my biggest concern is because of staff. If this were last fall and  
258 we were butting up against possibly a turnover of a new Council coming up in April, I would be  
259 pushing this and saying we have to get this done. A couple times ago when this happened and  
260 we got a whole new Council, the pay study just froze in its track and all that work was for  
261 nothing. But this is not the case with this."

262  
263 Fred told committee members he believes this item should be referred, noting the application that  
264 was just approved under Item 7 must go through a board to determine if the projects are eligible  
265 for the State Trust Fund Loan. Fred said, "You wouldn't want to move it too quickly. I'm sure  
266 Chief Ashbeck would love to order his squad cars. But he doesn't order them until I get the  
267 board from the State Trust Fund to authorize the funds for the City of Onalaska."

268  
269 Ald. Stevens asked Fred to clarify to when he is recommending this item be referred.

270  
271 Fred said he recommends referring this item to the February 5 Finance and Personnel Committee  
272 meeting.

273  
274 Hope told committee members if they can review the documents prior to the January 14  
275 Common Council meeting, that will allow the Council to determine whether or not additional  
276 quotes should be obtained. The additional quotes could come before the Finance and Personnel  
277 Committee at its February 5 meeting. Hope said she prefers to see this item referred to the  
278 Common Council meeting, stating, "If the Council chooses to have additional quotes, then we're  
279 not holding up that process."

280  
281 Motion by Ald. Wulf, second by Ald. Olson, to refer to the January 14 Common Council  
282 meeting review and consideration of expectations of the Compensation Study for 2020.

283  
284 Ald. Stevens said that while he does not object to referring this item to the Common Council  
285 meeting, "at least for this committee and any committee that I chair, I think I'm going to make it  
286 the expectation that if anything is presented to us at the last minute that is not an emergency or  
287 where time is of the essence, I think I'm going to have it be almost a default policy where we're  
288 going to have that so we refer it to the next applicable meeting. Most of us have livelihoods we  
289 have to deal with. I didn't know this existed until after I closed my office at 5:30. It is fairly  
290 comprehensive, and it is important for the well-being of our staff. This is a general notice that  
291 we need at least 24 hours notice if we're going to make a decision on something."

292  
293 On voice vote, motion carried.

294  
295 **Item 9 – Closed Session**

296

Reviewed 1/10/20 by Hope Burchell & Fred Buehler

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8

297 To consider a motion to convene in Closed Session under Section 19.85(1)(g) of the Wisconsin  
298 Statutes for the purpose of conferring with legal counsel for the governmental body who is  
299 rendering oral or written advice concerning strategy to be adopted by the body with respect to  
300 litigation in which it is or is likely to become involved:

301

302 • IAFF, International Association of Firefighters, Local 127: Grievance 2019-3 –  
303 RE: Part-Time Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs)

304 • IAFF, International Association of Firefighters, Local 127: Prohibited Practice  
305 Complaint – RE: Part-Time Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs)

306

307 If any action is required in Open Session, as a result of the Closed Session, the Committee will  
308 reconvene in Open Session to take the necessary action and/or continue on with the printed  
309 agenda.

310

311 Motion by Ald. Olson, second by Ald. Wulf, to convene in Closed Session.

312

313 On roll call vote: Ald. Diane Wulf – aye, Ald. Jim Olson – aye, Ald. Dan Stevens – aye. In  
314 Closed Session.

315

316

317 Recorded by:

318

319 Kirk Bey